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The Shepherd poems of John 10: Their Culture and Style

Ken Bailey

In his commentary on St. John's Gospel, C.K. Barrett notes approvingly Abraham Rihbany's explanation of the ways of shepherds in the Levant as he knew them in the 19th century (Rihbany, 207-16). Barrett observes that 'the text agrees well with what is known of shepherding in the east;...' (Barrett, 305). Rihbany grew up in the mountains of Lebanon and thus it is natural to give his personal experience due weight. However, Rihbany left the Middle East at the end of his childhood and experienced little beyond his own village. What he offers is often useful but at times imprecise and even inaccurate for the simple reason that his recollections of Middle Eastern life were limited to childhood in one mountain village.

The intent of this article is to examine the rhetorical style of John 10:1-30 and expose the culture that lies behind it with the hope that these two lenses can provide clarity for exegesis. It is not our purpose to review and debate the exhaustive recent literature on the Gospel of John. Rather, if the above mentioned lenses can be polished and focused, hopefully any exegetical reflection on John 10 can be served.

Over the past 25 years it has been my privilege to both observe and talk with numerous shepherds in the mountains of Lebanon and in the open country East of Jerusalem and Bethlehem on the West Bank of the Jordan River. A generation of my Arab theological college students from villages across the Middle East (both protestant and Catholic) have also provided important raw data for understanding the text. Style and culture are internally connected. We will focus both of these lenses on each 'poem.'

The text falls into a series of short rhetorical pieces, each of which has an internal structure worthy of note. What Lowth called 'Hebrew parallelism,' and what Kugel has renamed 'The Hebrew pause sentence,' is extensively employed in this text (cf. Kugel, 1-58). Intending to avoid the question of 'What is poetry?' we have employed the word 'poem' for these literary pieces for want of a better term. The first rhetorical unit (poem) is as follows: (cf. Plate 1 on the following page).

The literature available on John 10 reflects considerable confusion between the village and the countryside. There is also a failure to

Plate 1

First poem (John 10:1-5,6)

Truly, truly, I say to you

1. He who does **not enter** the sheepfold by the door
but climbs in by another way,
that man is a **thief** and a **robber**. THIEF
ROBBER
2. But he who **enters** by the **door**
is the **shepherd** of the sheep.
To him the gatekeeper opens. SHEPHERD
3. The sheep **hear** his voice.
He **calls** to his own sheep by name
and **leads them out**.
When he has brought out **all** his own
he **goes before them**.
The sheep **follow him**
for they **know** his voice SHEPHERD
4. A **stranger** they will not **follow**
but they **will flee from him**
for they do not know the voice of **strangers**. STRANGER
5. This figure/parable Jesus used with them,
but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

distinguish between Bedouin nomads living in tents and the average small town with its farmers and traders. The distinctions are critical. The community around Jesus lived in small towns. They were not desert nomads. The natural assumption is a background of small farming communities. If desert nomads are posited by the interpreter such a case would need to be argued from firm evidence.

The details of the first poem (#1-4) make clear that the text assumes the world of a traditional Middle Eastern village. Furthermore, the text is not discussing a shepherd who himself owns a large flock. Such a shepherd (be he villager or nomad) sleeps **within** the enclosure where his

sheep are kept. In this text the shepherd first appears outside the door where the sheep are found.

The picture is as follows. Nearly every family in a small Middle Eastern farming community (farmers, trades people or craftsmen) owns three to ten sheep. These animals are needed to provide wool for winter clothing, milk and meat. Yet this small number is not large enough to justify a full time adult shepherd. The villages are tightly knit communities with narrow walled streets. Most homes have small walled courtyards. The dwelling itself has a lower level at one end into which the animals are brought at night. This would normally involve the family cow, a donkey and the few sheep owned by the family. For most of the year the sheep can spend the night in the courtyard of the home. In bad weather, and in winter generally, they are brought into this lower level in the house. The text literally says, 'courtyard of the sheep.' This traditional split-level home, usually with a walled courtyard, can be traced from the iron age through to the middle of the twentieth century (cf. Bailey, *Manger*, 34-38).

Families on a single street, each with a few sheep, will together agree on who is to shepherd the community flock. Often it is a son (or two girls) of one of the families involved. If no one is available from the families of the owners, then a stranger/hireling is engaged.

The community ownership of the flock adds an important dimension to the good shepherd text in Luke 15:4-7 where the **community** rejoices together with the shepherd when a lost sheep is found. This is natural and expected because the flock is composed of their sheep (cf. Bailey, *Cross*, p. 23; Bishop, 166).

The parable ¹ opens with reference to the thief and the robber. The walls of the courtyard in the village are usually more than two meters high. They are **not** topped with thorns. Lower type walls with thorns on the top are a part of the picture that emerges from the second poem which is set in the open country. Appropriately this first scene is in the village. The thief must **climb over** a relatively high wall. His intent may be to steal a goat/lamb or to rob the sleeping family.

¹ In the LXX, *paroim...a* (v.6) often translated *mashal*. A thousand years of Arabic versions have consistently used the cognate word *mathal*. The Syriac versions use *felalt* rather than *manul* in this text but the two words are synonymous.

The second stanza of this first poem introduces the shepherd. There is no store of hay in the village home. The sheep must be taken out each day to eat. There have been numerous occasions in the recent past, here in the Middle East, where such animals have starved to death in villages under extended curfew. Western farmers have a winter's supply of hay stored in a barn to feed animals. Middle Eastern animals graze in the open country each and every day, winter and summer. So, the picture drawn in the text is a common scene. A shepherd is rounding up his flock in the early morning from the various households. As noted, in the text the shepherd does not live in the house from which most of the sheep are called forth. But he is of course known and the door-keeper/porter opens the door on hearing his voice. Here in vs. 1-5 the door, the door-keeper and the shepherd are all clearly separate entities.

Θύρα (vs. 1,2) means a door, not a gate. Lazarus lies at a gate πυλών but the rich man's gate is a large decorative entrance to an estate. The traditional Middle Eastern farmer has no gates for animals. The Authorised Version, and the NEB, correctly tell of a **door** and a **porter/door-keeper**. Other versions (JB, NRSV, TEV) have turned the door into a gate and the door-keeper into a gatekeeper. This is perhaps due to our Western lack of experience of village homes where the animals and people use the same door. The courtyard mentioned above has a door to the street. It can be the door to the house. More commonly it is the door to the courtyard around the house. The first century house of St. Peter in Capernaum, excavated recently by the Franciscans, had a single door from the street which opened into a courtyard. Most of the rooms of the house ringed that courtyard and opened onto it (cf. Meyers and Strange, 113-114; Corbo, plan II). So the door in the text is most naturally the door onto the street which would be used by both people and animals. This is a common arrangement in Middle Eastern village homes and is found all across the centuries (cf. Dalman, plates 31, 39, 57, 60, 71, 86, 89). But it is a heavy door in a stone wall (cf. Dalman, plate 12) for people and animals, not a farmer's gate. The Semitic word *beth/bait* (house) can refer both to a roofed dwelling and to a home with a courtyard around it. The people who live there are also a part of the 'bait' with its door on the street for people and animals. The medium of Endor had a fatted calf 'in the house' (cf. I Samuel 28:24).

Each shepherd has either a special call or a special tune that he plays on a small flute. The sheep know this voice/tune and will follow it. So each morning the shepherd enters the narrow village street, and gives his call. On hearing this familiar voice the gatekeeper opens the gate. If

necessary the shepherd will enter the courtyard and sound his call again. The sheep obediently follow that voice. This process is repeated in the various houses that have sheep waiting for him. 'When he has brought out all his own' (#3,d.) from the various houses 'he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.'

E.E. Bishop records an incident from Mandate times in Palestine that illustrates the above scene. In the thirties of this century a particular village had its animals sequestered by the Government. For a price they could be recovered. Bishop tells of

an orphan shepherd boy whose six or eight sheep and goats were all he had in the world for life and work. Somehow he obtained the money for their redemption. He went to the big enclosure where the animals were penned, offering his money to the British sergeant in charge. The N.C.O. told him he was welcome to the requisite number of animals, but ridiculed the idea that he could possibly pick out his 'little flock' from among the confiscated hundreds. The little shepherd thought differently, because he knew better; and giving his own 'call' for he had his *nai* (shepherd's pipe) with him, 'his own' separated from the rest of the animals and trotted out after him. 'I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep - and am known of mine' (Bishop, 297).

My Middle Eastern students have explained to me that a crisis occurs when the family purchases a new sheep. In the early morning the sheep awake hungry and are eager for the arrival of the shepherd so that they can proceed to the countryside for 'breakfast.' The excitement becomes communal and the sheep mill around the courtyard in heightened anticipation of the big moment when they hear the call, the big door is opened and they can crowd out the gate and begin the rush to the open grazing lands. The new sheep participates in all of this excitement. Then comes the call! But for the newcomer it is the **wrong** call. The others quickly leave but this poor animal cannot! It puts out pitiful cries, runs around the courtyard banging its head against walls evidencing a high level of stress. Others will eat. It will not. The familiar shepherd has not come. For 'they do not know the voice of strangers.' Obviously, in time, the new sheep can be trained. But the first few mornings are a dramatic enactment of the precise details of the parable.

In the text, once the flock is assembled in the narrow village street the shepherd then 'leads them out' and 'goes before them.' The sheep follow the voice that they know. With amazement I have watched a single shepherd, unaided, lead over 200 sheep through a valley by walking

slowly in front of them giving his ten-second call roughly every 40 seconds. A most instructive scene is to observe three shepherds with three different flocks at a single water source. The sheep mingle into one great mass of moving animals. Not one of them is marked in any way. In time, one shepherd decides it is time to go. Without looking back he starts down the path giving his familiar call, knowing full well that all his sheep/goats will follow without fail. They will pay **no** attention to strange voices.

Ibn al-Tayyib al-Mishriqi, the great 11th century Syriac commentator of Baghdad, notes that the shepherd has two reasons for wanting to be out in front. First, he frightens away wild animals as he proceeds with his loud call. Second, he can **lead** them to where he wants them to go rather than follow their wanderings (Ibn al-Tayyib, 550).²

Finally, Rihbany was not aware of any shepherd naming his sheep. Bishop found such evidence (Bishop, 279-99). I have found shepherds who name their sheep and others who do not. One senses that the 'good shepherd' knows his sheep by name. They are his friends. The scene represents authentic Middle Eastern village life in all of its details.

The four stanzas of this first poem follow an A-B-B-A form with 'Thief — Shepherd — Shepherd — Stranger' as a literary pattern. Stanza #3 has seven lines and uses inverted parallelism (chiasm) to order those lines. Three 'Hebrew pause sentences' appear. Inverted parallelism generally places the climax in the centre. Here the centre affirms that the shepherd brings out **all** his own. This brings us to the second poem. (cf. next page)

² Ibn al-Salibi of the 13th century makes an interesting comment on this same verse. He writes,

please know that his (the shepherd's) action (in leading the flock) is reversed in our day by the bishops who follow after the flock for the purpose of satisfying their abominable lusts and in order to gain fuel for the fires of their greediness. May the Most High save his people from them!! (Ibn al-Salibi, II, 368, [auto translation]).

Plate II

Poem II (John 10:7-10)

So Jesus said again to them,

'Amen, amen, I say to you,

6. **I am the door** of the sheep.

I AM - DOOR

7. All who came before me are **thieves** and **robbers** THIEVES
but the sheep did not heed them. ROBBERS

8. I am the **door**.

I AM - DOOR

If anyone **enters** by **me** he will

be **saved**

BY ME SAVED

and will go in and out and find' pasture.

9 The **thief** comes only to **steal**
and **kill** and **destroy**.

THIEF

STEAL/ KILL

10. **I came** that they may have **life**
and have it **abundantly**.

I CAME

FOR ABUNDANT LIFE

The second poem is set in the open pasture land where in the summer the sheep are occasionally kept over night in unroofed, (usually) round, stone-walled enclosures crudely built in the open country. There is no door and no door-keeper. The tops of the dry-stone walls are covered with thick clusters of thorns to protect the sheep from wild animals. Once inside the enclosure the sheep are safe as long as the open entrance is secured. There is no door. The shepherd sleeps across this entrance and thus **he is the door** (cf. Bishop, p. 299).

This second poem also uses inverted parallelism (chiasm) but adds a classical refinement. Here the centre relates to the beginning and to the end. The beginning (#6) and the middle (#8) are tied together with the phrase 'I am the door.' Then the middle (#8) has 'be saved' and the end (#10) reads 'have life.' This can be seen as follows:

6. I am the door of the sheep. DOOR
 8. I am the door. DOOR
 If anyone enters by me he will be saved. BE SAVED
 10. I came that they may have life HAVE LIFE
 and have it abundantly.

The bringing together of 'be saved' and 'have life' has a significant history.

The Greek word σάκω (and its derivatives) is translated in the Syriac versions of the gospels by various forms of the word *hy*' (to have life). This was noted by Birkitt who traced it to the theology of the authors of the Old Syriac (Birkitt, 81-82). It is maintained in the Peshitta and sustains itself in the early Arabic versions where 'saviour' is consistently translated as *muhyi* (the one who gives life. Cf. Staal, *passim*). More recently this feature has been identified as among the 'West Aramaic elements' which are carried over into the Old Syriac and Peshitta Gospels (Joosten, 275). Joosten argues that this interrelationship between 'be saved' and 'have life' is not found in the Peshitta OT and can only be attributed to 'Christian Palestinian Aramaic.' We might add that these early Palestinian Aramaic-speaking Christians may well have made this identification through their study of this text.

The theme of the **identity** (I am) and the **purpose** (I came) of the shepherd form the outer semantic envelope (cf. #6 and #10).

Stanzas #7 and #9 discuss the thieves and the climax of the poem appears in the centre which, as noted, is related thematically to the beginning and the end. We turn then to poem III. (cf. **following page**)

Initially we can observe that this poem is constructed of three stanzas. The interrelationships between the first and the third are significant and strong. The connections are both thematic and stylistic. The theme of 'I lay down my life' occurs twice in the first section and three times in the last. Stylistically each uses inverted parallelism. The summary words to the right of the text exhibit this feature.

Furthermore, the theme of 'the Father' which closes the first stanza of this poem (#6) is picked up in the opening (#10) and closing (#14) lines of the third stanza. This provides a third powerful link between these two sections.

Plate III

Poem III (John 10:11-18)

1a. I am the **good shepherd**. GOOD SHEPHERD

b. The **good shepherd** lays down his life for the sheep

2. He who is a **hireling** and not a shepherd, HIRELING
whose own the sheep are not

3. sees the **wolf** coming WOLF
and leaves the sheep and flees

4. and the **wolf** snatches them WOLF
and scatters them.

5. He flees because he is a **hireling** HIRELING
and **cares nothing** for the sheep

6a. I am the **good shepherd**. GOOD SHEPHERD
I know my own and my own know me,
and the **Father** knows me and I know the **Father**,
b. and I lay down my life for the sheep.

7. And I have other sheep I HAVE SHEEP
that are not of this fold. NOT THIS FOLD

8. I must bring them also I BRING
and they will heed my voice. THEY HEED

9. So there will be one flock ONE FLOCK
and one shepherd. ONE SHEPHERD

10. For this reason the **Father** loves me FATHER LOVED

11. because I lay down my life I LAY DOWN LIFE
that I may take it up again. TAKE IT AGAIN

12. **No one takes it from me** NO ONE TAKES IT
but I lay it down of my own accord. I GIVE IT

13. I have **power** to lay it down I - POWER TO LAY DOWN
and I have **power** to take it again. I - POWER TO TAKE AGAIN

14. This **charge** I have **received** from my **Father**. FATHER GIVES CHARGE

The First Section

The themes of 'Good Shepherd', 'hireling' and 'wolf' are set forth and then repeated backwards. The Good Shepherd image evokes psalm 23, Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Ezekiel 34. In all three of these texts God himself is (Ps. 23) or promises to become (Jer. & Ez.) the shepherd of his lost sheep. Thus this passage is freighted with a high Christology but moves significantly beyond the references noted above. In these OT passages God is the shepherd who will **himself** come after his lost flock. But **no price** is mentioned. Here a **high** price is paid by the shepherd. He lays down his life for the sheep.

The shepherd's motive is subtly stated. The hireling 'cares nothing for the sheep.' Presumably, the Good Shepherd **loves** his sheep and thus is willing to suffer for them. Where do these ideas come from?

In the prophetic writings God acts to save for two clear reasons. He will save his people for **his sake** and for **their sake**. The first is the message of Ezekiel. The second is set forth by Hosea and Jeremiah. In Ezekiel 36:22 God tells the prophet,

It is **not for your sake**, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name,... And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name....

Ps. 23 presents the same theme. God, the good shepherd, will 'bring us back' or 'cause us to repent' (*yashubib*) and lead us 'in the paths of righteousness' **for his own name sake**

But on the other hand, even as Hosea loves his wayward Gomar, even so God loves his people, declares the prophet. He will save **for their sake**. God's compassion is 'warm and tender' for Ephraim (11:8).

Popular perceptions of **all** the Good Shepherd texts in the Gospels (Matt.18:10-13, Luke 15:4-7; John 10:1-18) are that the shepherd's motivation is **love**. Ps. 23:3 clearly affirms the other side of the coin. For there, as noted, God acts 'for his name's sake.' As regards the three NT texts only here is the motive of love clearly expressed. The hireling does **not care** for the sheep and runs away (v.13).³ The Good Shepherd, by implication, cares enough for his sheep to die for them (#1a, #6a).

³ A village wisdom saying/proverb from the mountains of southern Lebanon(Galilee) says:

In unit #6 a second classical OT rhetorical device appears. The two lines of #1 are repeated in #6 almost verbatim (compare #1a&b to #6a&b). But between #6a and #6b a new couplet appears. That is, the couplet in #1 is repeated in #6 and then *split* and new material is added in the middle. David N. Freedman observes this feature in OT poetry. He writes,

A more complex and less easily recognised form of inclusion (or envelope construction) does not involve the repetition of terms, but rather the resumption or completion of a thought. It is as though the poet deliberately split abicolon or couplet, and inserted a variety of materials between the opening and closing halves of that unit to form a stanza (Freedman, p. XXXVI).

Thus the repetitions in the text are not haphazard but rather follow a known, carefully ordered rhetorical pattern. Only by discerning this pattern is it possible to think the author's thought after him.

Section Three

Although thematically related, this third section moves critically beyond the first. The first section (#1, #6) refers to the **cross**. This section discusses both the **cross** and the **resurrection**. As Brown has noted,

In Johannine thought, in particular, the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension constitute the one indissoluble salvific action of return to the Father (Brown, 399).

More than this, Jesus affirms himself to be the **director** of the passion story. **He** lays down his life and takes it up again (#11). No one takes his life, **he** lays it down of his own accord (#12). **He** has the power to lay it down and the power to take it again (#13).

The Gospel of John is often accused of being an anti-Semitic document. This text throws that assumption into question. 'The Jews' are

"When the wolf came, the sheep-dog turned aside to relieve himself." The point of the proverb is not that the sheep-dog is **afraid** of the wolf. Rather, he doesn't want to be held responsible. How can he be held responsible for something he does not observe? He did not **see anything!!**

In the West we traditionally assume that the hireling is afraid of the wolf. This is no doubt a part of the intent of the text for the Good Shepherd pledges a willingness to "lay down his life for the sheep." So a costly fight between the shepherd and the wolf is presupposed. Yet a Middle Eastern village mindset also posits the motive of flight from responsibility.

not responsible for the cross. Rather, 'no one takes it (my life) from me.' The reality is, 'I lay it down of my own accord.'

This same text presents another critical theme. Often much is said about the powerless nature of the life of Jesus. Here that perception is qualified. Jesus has power over the direction of his own servant hood. The suffering servant is powerless in one sense, but in another profound sense exercises crucial power. He asserts the freedom to choose the nature and focus of his servant hood. **He** lays down his life. No one takes it from him. He makes the critical choices and has the power to do so.

The opening (#10) and closing (#14) lines of this third section are two sides of a single coin. The first tells the reader that the Father **loves** the Son. In the last, the Son receives a **charge** from the Father.

This third section is also a clear case of 'chain link' parallelism. A theme at the end of one couplet is repeated at the beginning of the next. This type of linkage then continues and creates a closely knit flow of ideas. This literary device is prominent in the prologue of the Gospel (cf. Bultmann, p.15). It occurs also in Paul's discussion of the resurrection (cf. I Cor.15:12-20).

Section Two

The centre section of this poem is often popularly quoted out of context to justify religious pluralism. A full study of this text is beyond the scope of this brief paper. Yet a few comments relevant to rhetorical style can be made in passing.

First, we observe that this second stanza (#7-9) is framed by references to the passion. Thus #7-9 can only be interpreted responsibly in the light of the cross, and never in isolation from it. Second, whoever these sheep are, they belong to Christ. They will hear his voice and be incorporated into **his** flock. The text does not suggest that this Good Shepherd will one day join a series of other shepherds who will then form a co-operative 'shepherds' union.'

The final poem, in spite of the intervening dialogue, can be seen as a part of this same collection. The text is as follows:
(please note plate IV on the following page.)

After the dialogue the final poem of this series appears. A number of features within our limited focus can be observed.

Plate IV

Dialogue and poem IV (John 10:19-30)

1. There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said,

2. 'He has a demon, and is mad;
why listen to him?'

Others said,

3. 'These are not the sayings of one who has a demon.
Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'

4. It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; it was raining, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him,

5. 'How long will you keep us in suspense?
If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.'

Jesus answered them,

6. I told you, **and you do not believe.**

The works that I do in my father's name, **MY SHEEP**
they bear witness to me; **YOU - NOT BELIEVE**
but **you do not believe**, because you do not belong to **my sheep**.

7. My sheep hear my voice,

and I know them, **MY SHEEP**
and they follow me; **I GIVE LIFE**
and I give them **eternal life**, and they shall not perish.

8. And **no one shall snatch them out of my hand.**

My Father, who has given them to me, **MY SHEEP**
is greater than all, **SECURITY**
and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand**

9 I and the Father are one.

First, the same 'chain link' connection noted above reoccurs. The theme of 'mysheep' concludes #6 and opens #7. 'Shall not perish' ends #7 and #8 opens with the same idea expressed in different words.

Second, the theme of 'the father' which was prominent in the third stanza of poem three reoccurs.

Finally, the entire sequence comes to the climax of 'I and the Father are one.' In Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Ezekiel 34 God promises to one day come himself as the shepherd of his flock and to 'bring back (cause to

repent' the lost. We have argued elsewhere that in the parable of the prodigal Son the Father, at the conclusion of the story, becomes a symbol of God in Christ. This theme, already noted by Abdallah Ibn al-Tayyib of Baghdad in the 11th century (cf. Bailey, *Finding*, p. 150), is reaffirmed by Jeremias in his influential commentary on the parables as he writes,

Jesus ...claims that in his actions the love of God to the repentant sinner is made effectual. Jesus makes the claim for himself that he is acting in God's stead, that he is God's representative (Jeremias, 132).

At the conclusion of this collection of poems on the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, the reader is confronted not only with a unity of **action** between the Son and the Father, but also with a unity of **substance**. Not only does the Good Shepherd (Jesus) do the **work** of the Father in restoring the lost, but is the very presence of the Father in their midst.

Thus, the material in John 10:1-30 offers the reader a series of four poems\ songs\ rhetorical units on the topic of the Good Shepherd. The cultural assumptions behind the material are culturally authentic to our Middle Eastern world of sheep and shepherds. The first poem invokes early morning in the village. The last three are set in the open countryside. The pictures created continue to be common and well-known.

An awareness of the simple yet time-honoured use of inverted repetition and of the Hebrew parallelisms greatly simplify and clarify what can otherwise appear to be a jumble of repetition. These poems present themselves as finely tuned rhetorical pieces full of beauty and rich with theological meaning.

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Faith, Freedom and the Future¹

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1. FAITH

Most of us, I suspect, will have been brought up with the idea that there are two avenues to our knowledge of God -the natural and the supernatural. The former was seen in two ways - reason can lead us by proofs to the existence of a supreme being; or, there is an intuitive knowledge of such a being or beings implanted in each one of us. The traditional view posited belief in a supreme being and called this being God. This was regarded as a kind of preliminary, a preamble to the Christian revelation.

However, these views were seen as inadequate since God can only be known in his truth and fullness in Jesus Christ. Natural Theology, as it is called, had also another apologetic function as an argument against unbelief.² Yet others argued that one could discern traces of God in the created universe - and this was called general, as contrasted with, special revelation.³

Now these views have been under attack for some time, indeed for some centuries, even though they are still held by many. Criticism came first from the philosophers like the Scot David Hume and the German Immanuel Kant and latterly from theologians as well.⁴ Questions such as the following were asked: is a supreme being identical with the Christian conception of God? Does not sin, as Calvin said at the time of the Reformation, mar our ideas to such an extent that the God we conceive by ourselves turns out to be an idol? Does the Bible itself give any credence to a knowledge of God whom we can discover or to a general revelation in creation? If it does, it is very peripheral. In the past theism, i.e. belief in one God discovered or proven, was felt to be an ally of revelation. Today this view is seriously questioned. Indeed the opposite is affirmed, namely, that theism is so dubious and weak an argument that it is rejected and with it its Christian ally revelation. In their place we have atheism of various kinds. The God of Natural Theology turned out to be no God at all. Christian thought, therefore, today finds itself in a new situation, what one

¹ This lecture was delivered at the Public Opening of Union Theological College, Belfast on Monday 28th. Sept. 1992.

² Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, pp. 47ff.

³ Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God, Dogmatics* vol. I, pp. 14ff.

⁴ Among modern theologians one can name Karl Barth, Jürgen Moltmann, Eberhard Jüngel, all of whom oppose so-called Natural Theology.

might call the twilight of the gods. If God, that is the supposed God of natural theology is dead, as Nietzsche said in the last century, are we not sent back to the one thing needful, to the one true source of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ and to faith in him as the one, true revelation of the divine nature?

This is in fact the argument favoured by some leading German theologians today including J Moltmann, Eberhard Jüngel and Walter Kasper, the former two Protestant and the latter Roman Catholic and all from Tübingen. The first two especially take their cue originally from Karl Barth. Barth is a strong opponent of natural theology and believes that he has the Bible on his side. He writes, 'In the whole Bible of the Old and New Testaments not the slightest attempt is ever made to prove God'.⁵ The true knowledge of God is given in Jesus Christ. There God has made his name and nature known. The Christian revelation therefore does not require these supposed preliminaries; it stands in its own right and makes natural theology both superfluous and impossible. It is superfluous because all that we need to know of God is given us in Jesus Christ and it is impossible because no one by natural means could ever discover that a crucified man was the revelation of God. Now not all by any means follow this argument. Pannenberg,⁶ another German scholar, in his recent publication entitled *Systematic Theology* argues, not for the old philosophical proofs, but for the intuitive knowledge of a god or gods and quotes the example of other faiths and religions as indicators of the truth of this form of knowledge. There is, however, a strong movement away from such a position.

Thus today we are asked to consider the revelation in Jesus Christ as the one sure foundation. This is, in fact, the position adopted by the main Christian creeds though not by all confessions of faith. They say implicitly - we do not begin with some general view of God and then go on to equate this with the God of revelation. We do not seek natural proofs in order to believe but the reverse 'Credo ut Intelligam' - 'I believe in order that I may understand'. The Creeds all begin therefore with faith in God revealed in Christ 'I believe' and 'We believe' say the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. Let us take the first article of the Creed: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth ...'. This is not the discovery of natural theology; it is a tenet of faith. It is not something shared by all and sundry in some kind of forecourt of the gentiles. Rather

⁵ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, p. 37.

⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol I, pp. 63ff and pp. 119ff.

it is because we believe in Christ that we know God as Father and our Creator and therefore believe in him. It is not only Christ and his work that is the manifestation of the grace of God but as Luther said 'creation is also grace'. In fact many world views do not share this idea of a creator God at all or that God and the world are to be distinguished. There are many conceptions of the universe which see the world as an aspect of the divine or an emanation from the deity. The Christian view is quite unique and has its basis in relation to both redemption and creation in the one and only name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let me give you a further example of change in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. Here modern theology differs from traditional views. They began with the unity of God, 'De Deo Uno,' concerning the one God and then went on to speak of 'De Deo Trino' concerning the triune God, three in one and one in three. The real error of that approach, as with theism, is that there is no God who is simply one, singular. The unity of God is the unity of three in one. Moreover, to begin with unity and then go on to trinity could mean fitting the trinity into a preconceived idea of unity. Karl Rahner, a prominent Roman Catholic theologian, has pointed out that this is an implicit Unitarianism.⁷ He goes on to show how this, especially in the Catholic tradition, has been a prominent feature of theology and has led to a minimal place being given to the doctrine of the trinity.

Thankfully, within the last two decades there has been considerable change in our conception of the nature and function of the triune God. The Trinity is viewed not as an abstruse dogma accepted but largely set aside. Rather, it is seen as the expression of the living, dynamic God of revelation who has life, love and fellowship within himself and who gives us the pattern for our lives in Church and society.⁸ This he communicates to us and enables us to participate in the fellowship of the divine life. Moreover, as a society or fellowship, a being in relationship, his life is the paradigm or exemplar and inspiration of what we are called to be in Church and society, in fellowship one with another. In modern thought, therefore, on the basis of revelation, the Trinity has once more become highly significant and relevant for Christian life, for the Church, for worship, for its theology and for social and practical concerns.

⁷ Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp., 15ff.

⁸ See, for example, *The Forgotten Trinity*, the Report of the B.C.C. Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine To-day.

Thus the older views which had an element of natural theology are now suspect. In contrast to a rather static view of the nature and being of God and the Christian revelation, given almost in propositional forms, modern attempts are made to show God as dynamic, living, active, entering in sacrifice, in vulnerability into our history and sufferings, our sin and needs. The Christian revelation properly understood gives us, therefore, further fresh insight into the nature of God.

The very heart of that revelation is the person of Jesus Christ. One can put it like this; if the centre of God's revelation is in Christ, the centre of Christ is the cross and the cross is seen not apart from his life and work but as the crown and culmination of it,⁹ the coronation of the royal man, the manifestation of the deity of the living God. The one true being of God is in Jesus Christ the crucified. It is above all on the cross that God is most clearly revealed. Here in the greatest possible contradiction God is at one and the same time concealed, veiled in flesh and yet known as he really is. This supreme veiling, this darkest hiddenness, this setting of the Son as it were over against the Father in atonement, and yet the two as one in this act is the revelation of the very nature of the true God himself. It is this death that manifests the life of God so that some theologians like Moltmann, following Luther, speak of the crucified God, or, Jüngel, the death of the living God,¹⁰ phrases that must be carefully used and defined. While it is not meant that God actually ceases to be, which is an impossibility, it is by submitting himself in the man Jesus to death in union with the Son on the cross that the very nature of life, of the living God is revealed.

Here, however, one must add a further important thought and that is that the whole life of Christ including his death would not have these characteristics, would in fact be meaningless and tragic, were it not for what followed, that God raised his Son Jesus from the dead, confirming all that he was and said and did. It is there that one sees the revelation of God as he really is. The resurrection casts its light back on the whole life, ministry and cross of Jesus and gives it its revelatory significance; it casts its light back on the whole of the Old Testament and gives it its Christian character. Bengel, one of the old theologians, a couple of centuries ago said that the Scriptures breathe the resurrection. Were it not for the

⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4, 2 centres his doctrine of reconciliation on the cross and resurrection, pp. 199ff.

¹⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, *passim*; Eberhard Jüngel, *Vom Tod des lebendigen Gottes in Unterwegs zur Sache*, pp. 105-125.

resurrection the cross would be a dead letter, what happened there would be closed off from us. But what happened in the resurrection has opened to us the saving significance of the cross and by the power of the Holy Spirit creates faith in us. That is the God in whom we believe, that is our faith.¹¹ We are thus challenged today by our theologians to rethink our conception of God, to see him in this living and dynamic way in the light of what he has actually done in the life and death of Jesus Christ and in the power of his resurrection. The practical consequences of this are that we abandon or at least query the old Apologetics and follow what is the main thrust of the New Testament proclamation and its theology, namely that we bear witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, Son of the Father, giver of the Spirit, our Redeemer and Lord.

2. FREEDOM

We come now to the second word, 'freedom' and will look at it in three ways. First, Christian freedom is the freedom of God who is love. God loves and lives in the freedom of his own life in the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and comes to us in the Son by the Spirit for our salvation. What God has done in Christ is done out of his free love. This means that he is not forced by any necessity in himself or any external pressure, not even our sin, though he does come to take away our sin. It is an act of complete freedom which when received by us liberates us, is, as our reformed forebears said, free grace, wholly undeserved and unconditional. Yet, as Bonhoeffer pointed out, it is not a cheap but a costly grace, costing the whole drama of God's sacrificial act in Christ by the Holy Spirit. And it is the Spirit who makes us alive, sets us free from our bondage to sin and evil, brings us into the liberty of the children of God and enables us to call God our Father.

Secondly, Christian freedom is freedom for fellowship. This freedom which the Christian faith affirms and as Christians we experience is from first to last a community affair. God has always chosen a people, the people of Israel and the Church, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, to reflect his triune life; freedom and fellowship. Personal faith is within this context. Has not much of our practice, if not our theology, departed seriously from this conception? Individualism whether past or present, a low view of the Church and the sacraments, a history of schism all go back, to some extent at any rate, to the neglect of the doctrine of the Church. This century has been called the century of the

¹¹ Barth, op. cit., pp. 283ff.

Church and current theology re-emphasises that we are free in the full sense of the term as members of this community, in fellowship with Christ and with one another. The Creeds do not say, I believe simply on my own but I believe as a member of God's people. We believe 'the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

One of the areas where, within the Church, the whole conception of freedom is important is in relation to the past. In theology, the great past traditions which we inherit, our confessional documents, have moulded us strongly especially here in Ireland. I suggest the way we should seek to deal with these is summed up in the phrase 'respectful freedom in relation to tradition'.¹² The respect comes first. Our forebears have left us a great heritage which influences us powerfully still. Theologically, the Reformation and the 17th Century movement figure greatly in our thinking and action especially in Presbyterianism. The wrong attitude towards this is to absolutise tradition and confessions, treating them as if they were more than human forms and expressions of a particular age and forgetting that the faith has to be lived out and thought through afresh in each new generation. Jürgen Moltmann in his book *The Crucified God*¹³ speaks about the need for identity and relevance. We would lose our souls if we lost our Christian identity, that is the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. At the same time, our identity becomes petrified if it is simply equated with a past tradition. Tradition then can be seen as almost the only way to interpret Scripture. It then goes on to be set side by side with Scripture and then virtually takes over. Thus tradition becomes the norm; tradition rules. We do what we accuse the Roman Catholic tradition of doing and we are paying the price for it today. To absolutise tradition or to neglect our identity with the past are both wrong ways. The third way is freedom in relation to tradition. This is not freedom to do or to believe anything or everything which would be licence. Rather freedom in this context means to be free to assess all traditions in the light of the supreme standard of Holy Scripture. Our forebears said that all councils have erred and must be subject to a higher court. This is also implicit in the great slogan which we inherit from the past that the Church reformed must be a church submitting itself continually to reformation. I take this to mean not just renewal in life but in thought, submitting ourselves to rethinking and re-expressing the faith and relating it relevantly to the issues of the hour. This is an aspect of our Christian and our theological liberty and a continuing obligation to be exercised in relation to all our traditions.

¹² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1,2, pp. 695ff.

¹³ Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 7ff.

Thirdly, freedom is both a gift and a task (Gabe und Aufgabe). It summons us to responsible behaviour and has moral and ethical requirements of holiness, love and peace built into it. It is a call to service which in Christ is perfect freedom. It is based on and reflects the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It involves those hard things we shirk too easily, self-sacrifice, self-denial, taking up the cross, dying with Christ that with him we may truly and freely live. It is, quite simply, as the New Testament states, working out our own salvation as God works in us.

A further obligation is not only to stand for and promote freedom in the Church but to see it and its implications for society and politics, to look for systems of government built on freedom and guaranteed by law and order. The Church's approach is neither purely individualistic nor collectivistic but surpasses both in seeking a social order that embraces all freely. And the obligation laid upon us is in line with the wishes of so many people today.

There is a view that is held by many and has often a great deal of truth in it that the Church is over against the world and is there to counter the spirit of the age. Very often it has to swim against the stream. The liberty of the Sixties encapsulated in Moltmann's Theology of Hope¹⁴ all too quickly evaporated and degenerated into the permissive society. While this is so, is there not another possibility, which I put before you that in every age those things which concern us in the Church are also the concern of the world outside the Church in a different way.

Is not one of the great yearnings of our age, and rightly so, the cry freedom going up today from many quarters and groups, the cry of the poor for sustenance and of the oppressed for justice, of women for equality, dignity and opportunity, of all the under-privileged to be lifted up? These are not the same as the liberty of the children of God but do they not to some extent reflect that liberty in the world and so are signs of the Kingdom? A Church and its theology which believes in liberty will affirm all legitimate human hopes and be an agent for promoting peace, justice and freedom for all humankind.

¹⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope: on the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*.

3. THE FUTURE

A further area which has been given considerable attention in modern theology is the place of hope for the future described in theological terms as eschatology, the doctrine of the last things. The old view was that it came at the end and deals with death, the future life, the judgement, and this is still perfectly in order.¹⁵ But modern theology sees eschatology not simply as dealing with the future but affirms that in the coming and life of Jesus, in his preaching of the kingdom of God, in his life and death, the last days have come already, are realised in this present age, in principle at any rate. But, while it is here in its reality in him yet it awaits a manifestation at the end of time and history. There is therefore a clear relationship between what has happened already in Christ, his once for all acts, and what is still outstanding. To put it otherwise, there is a tension between the already and the not yet.¹⁶

Others like Moltmann in his book *The Theology of Hope*¹⁷ see the future aspect as the entirely predominant one. What God has brought in Christ is the confirmation of the Old Testament promises; it is, however, the future to which we look for a real fulfilment. With Moltmann there is no once for allness in the Christ event but only hope for that fullness in the future. So his theology and that of another fellow German, Pannenberg,¹⁸ is future orientated in a one-sided way. It is virtually lacking in a real doctrine of the atonement.

My own view is that the relationship between the 'already' and the 'not yet' is a much more balanced view and more in line with the substance of New Testament teaching. This means that in the light of the end already real in Christ, we await the ultimate manifestation of his reign in glory. In other words we not only have faith in Christ past and freedom in him by the Holy Spirit in the present but we have the hope for the future coming again of the same Lord in judgement and consummation. We believe not only in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting but we look for new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will dwell, for a new creation of people and the cosmos where God will perfect his

¹⁵ Heppe, op. cit., pp. 695-712; *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chpts. xxxii and xxxiii.

¹⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, Vol I, pp. 96ff; John Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 187ff.

¹⁷ Moltmann, op. cit., *passim*.

¹⁸ Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, pp. 74ff; E. Frank Tupper, *The Theology of Wolfgang Pannenberg*, pp. 186ff.

kingdom and he will be all in all. Here is a great, many-faceted, panoramic vision of our future hope.

I want to draw your attention here to something which has often been missing in our conception of the faith under the aspect of the future, namely the link between redemption and creation. Much traditional theology saw salvation as simply for men and women or for their souls determined for heaven and not hell and the whole cosmic dimension was omitted. In one of his latest books, *The Way of Jesus Christ*,¹⁹ Moltmann points out how this could and possibly did lead to our ignoring the creaturely order in God's purpose and led to its abuse and exploitation. It was, was it not, going to perish anyway and was of little or no significance for our salvation. In many of the books on the atonement and reconciliation this aspect is almost entirely lacking. But the New Testament and modern theology, which follows it, speak otherwise. We have indeed as humans a future hope but it is not merely a kingdom on our own as humans with God. It is the hope of a cosmic consummation. This cosmic vision, however sketchily outlined, is clearly brought before us in the New Testament. It is God's purpose to reconcile all things to himself both in heaven and on earth and this does not mean universalism. Rather it is indicative of God's will to embrace not only humans but his creation, the whole cosmos in his redemptive purposes and future glory.

Hope in the God of the future is quite simply hope in Jesus Christ, in what he has done for us, and, on the basis of that end, promises still to do. This is a great antidote to the despair to which we are prone in our own situation here in Ireland and in all the savagery and brutality of the human misuse of freedom in our world. It is also an antidote to those frightening scenarios to which we are often treated of global warming which will destroy the earth, of the apocalyptic view of nuclear destruction, now thankfully less than it was, or the old Armageddon view of the end coming from the Middle East, where today as elsewhere there are signs of hope.

¹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ. Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, pp. 272, 283, 312.

But as Christians with our hope in Christ we cannot give these human views the last word. The end and fulfilment of all things and human destiny are ultimately in God's power. He is the ultimate Lord of the future, the victor over sin and death, the Lord of creation. His kingdom has come and will be manifest in all its glory at the last. This is ours and the world's abiding comfort and sure hope.

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BATACH in the Book of the Psalms.

Rev. Dr. Ofosu Adutwum

The Book of Psalms is the one Book in the Old Testament in which **הָלְלָה** occurs most frequently. Before we enter into the study of the word in this Book, however, we would like to make a very brief mention of the literary types (*Gattungen*) which have been discovered in the Psalms, as well as to remind ourselves of the place of the Psalms in the life of Israel.

II

It was Gunkel who, in the early part of this century, first drew attention to the literary peculiarities of the Psalms, as well as to their cultic importance in the life of the Israelites. In his opinion the Psalms consist of types which are distinguishable from one another. There are major types and minor types. Under the major types he lists the following:

- 1 Hymn: 8; 19; 29; 33; 65; 67; 68; 135; 146; 150 etc.
- 2 Lament of the Community: 44; 74; 80; 83.
3. Royal Psalm: 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 132; etc.
- 4 Lament of the Individual: 3; 5-7; 13; 22; 25; 26; 28; 31; 41; 55-57; 71; 86; 140-143 etc.
5. Individual Song of Thanksgiving: 18; 30; 34; 40:2-12; 92; 118; etc.

Under each of these major types are accommodated certain sub-types which are found to be related to them. These are:

- 1 Hymn:
 - (a) Songs of Zion: 46; 48; 76; 84; 87
 - (b) Enthronement Psalms: 47; 95; 97; 99
 - (c) Certain 'liturgies' and mixed poems: 9:6-13; 16f; 12:7-9; 36:6-10; 115:3-8 etc.
2. Lament of the Community: certain 'liturgies' and mixed poems: 9:18-21; 10:1-18; 12:2-5; 60:3-7; 11-14; 77:8-10 etc.
3. Lament of the Individual:
 - (a) Psalms of Confidence: 4; 11; 16; 23; 27:1-6; 62; 125; 131.
 - (b) Certain 'liturgies': 19:13f; 36:2-5; 11-13; 77:2-7 etc.
4. Individual Song of Thanksgiving:
 - (a) Some verses from the acrostic poems: 9:2-5; 119:7; 26a; 65; 71; 75; 92 etc.
 - (b) Verses which carry thanksgiving in the Laments: 7:18; 13:6; 22:23ff; 27:6 etc.

The minor types which Gunkel discovered include:

1. Wisdom Psalms: 1; 37; 49; 91; 112; 128
2. Songs of Pilgrimage: 122.
3. Torah Liturgy: 19:3; 42:8; 50:8; 14f; 22f; 65:9.
4. National Songs of Thanksgiving: 67; 124; 129.¹

All these Psalm types, according to Gunkel, were cultic in origin and were associated with cultic situations. He was nevertheless of the opinion that most Psalms were freely composed and made the vehicle for the conveyance of the feelings and thoughts of their authors. They were marked by greater 'spirituality' than other similar cultic literature. One cannot be absolutely sure about the events in the life of Israel which gave birth to the Psalms.

It is however clear enough, he believed, that certain great national crises and individual personal experiences led to the composition of the Psalms to give expression to experienced distress, release and its accompanying joy, and the acknowledgement of the gracious sovereignty of God in the life of both the nation and individuals belonging to it.

Gunkel's approach to the Psalms was elaborated by Mowinckel. He shared the view that the Psalms were rooted in the worship of Israel. He however added that it was not enough to describe the forms and contents of Psalms from the point of view of *Gattungsforschung* and the history of literature. The cultic situation which lies behind them must be sought and set forth in all its complexity. This led him to the reconstruction of the New Year Festival an important part of which was said to be the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh. As in Babylonian religion the New Year Festival marked the enthronement of the god Marduk, so also in Israel Yahweh's enthronement was marked by the New Year Festivals. The great festal procession which marked Yahweh's victorious, coronation entry was the main event of the festival, and Yahweh's personal presence in the procession, it was assumed, was symbolised by the Ark. Mowinckel came to the conclusion that the situation in life (*Sitz im Leben*) of the Psalms was

¹ For a detailed summary of Gunkel's study in the Psalms cf. H. H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, Oxford, 1961, pp. 162-207. Cf. also G. W. Anderson, ed., *Tradition and Interpretation*, Oxford, 1979, pp. 238-272; K. Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*, London, 1969, pp. 159-182; Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, Atlanta, 1981.

the New Year Festival, and therefore assigned a large number of the Psalms to this Festival.²

In the view of Weiser the *Sitz im Leben* of the majority of the Psalms was to be found in the Covenant Festival of Yahweh. This covenant was celebrated at New Year, and the important aspect of it was the renewal of the covenant of Sinai. The Festival was celebrated not only for a spiritual purpose, but also to practically recall through it a historical tradition. It was as a result of the Festival, he asserted, that most of the Psalms came into being.³

Kraus, on the other hand, draws attention to the Royal Festival on Mount Zion. From 2 Sam 6, he says, it can reasonably be assumed that there was a cultic repetition of the event of bringing the Ark in solemn procession to Mount Zion with rejoicing, cultic dancing and sacrifices. It is clear from 1 Kgs. 8 and Ps. 132, he maintains, that the ascent of the Ark to Mount Zion was an act of worship of fundamental importance. The cultic repetition dealt not only with the election of Jerusalem, but also with the election of David (2 Sam 7). He sees the two sacred elements as intertwined in the cultic actualisation of the main facts concerning the official sanctuary in Jerusalem. The decisive evidence for the Festival, he asserts, is provided in Ps. 132 whose focal points are the election of David (vv 11ff) and the election of Jerusalem (v 13). His view, he says, supports and more accurately defines Gunkel's view of the Psalm in question as a pointer to a festival that was dedicated to the remembrance of the founding of the royal dynasty and its sanctuary. He would see the Festival as providing the setting for the Psalms.⁴

Westermann,⁵ on his part, takes the Song of Miriam (Ex 15), the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) and Isa 6:3 as the point of departure for the determination of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Psalms. In the first two passages, he says, praise is offered to God for his intervention in the history of Israel, and in the Isaianic passage praise springs from the revelation of God in the fullness of his being and action. He sees that in Israel worship is inextricably bound up with the history of God with his people and for this reason the *Gattungen* of the Psalms, he says, can be seen only in connection with that history. To him the *Gattungen* of the Psalms are not first and

² cf. S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I, Oxford 1962, pp. 106-192.

³ Cf. A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, London, 1962, pp. 27-52.

⁴ Cf. H. -J. Kraus, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, Oxford, 1966, pp. 183ff.

⁵ Cf. his *Das Leben in den Psalmen*, Göttingen, 1968, pp. 11-19.

foremost or in the main literary and cultic categories. They are rather a description of the fundamental ways of what man does by word of mouth in the direction of God - Entreaty and Praise. He thus maintains that the *Sitz im Leben* of the Psalms is to be seen in the basic event in the 'cult' which proceeds from man to God: 'Das polare Geschehen des Reden zu Gott als Flehen und als Loben Dies ist der eigentliche 'Sitz im Leben' für die Psalmen.'⁶

It is clear that, in spite of the one scholar or the other preferring to see this or that festival or event as that which provided the setting for the Psalms, they are not divided in the opinion that the Psalms are rooted in the worship of Israel. It should be clear to us, therefore, that **תְּפִלָּה** is a word which was found important for the verbal articulation of the attitudes and feelings of the people of Israel in the context of worship. With this we take up the consideration of the word in the Psalms.

III

In the Psalms **תְּפִלָּה** is met in the following Psalm types:

Hymn

Psalm of Thanksgiving

Lament

Royal Psalm

Wisdom Psalm

It occurs nine times in the Hymn, five times in the Psalm of Thanksgiving, twenty-three times in the Lament, once in the Royal Psalm and seven times in the Wisdom Psalm.

In the Hymn **תְּפִלָּה** is found in the hymnic introduction (146:3),⁷ in the main hymnic section (9:11; 115:8,9,10,11; 155:18) and in the hymnic conclusion (35:21; 84:13).

In the Psalm of Thanksgiving it is found in the main section of the Psalm (32:10; 40:4; 41:10; 118:8,9).

In the Lament it occurs in the expression of confidence (Ps 22:5,6,10; 27:3; 31:5; 44:7; 52:10; 55:24; 56:4,5,12; 125:1), in petition (25:2; 86:2; 143:8), in protestation of innocence (26:1; 31:7), in exhortation (4:6;

⁶ *Ibid* pp. 116-118.

⁷ The verse numberings are those of the Hebrew Old Testament.

62:9,11), in the expression of the certainty of having been heard (28:7), in the conclusion of the lament (13:6).

In the Royal Psalm it occurs in the statement of the ground for the divine favours to the king (21:8). It expresses an essential element in the preconditions of the divine favours to the king. In the Wisdom Psalm it is used in the contexts of imperatives by which exhortations are made (37:1,5), in the context of the presentation of the upright man (112:7), in the context of the exaltation of the *Torah* (119:42). In Ps 91 it occurs as an element of confession which emerges from divine protection (v.2). In 49:7 it occurs in the thematic sentence of the Psalm. It also occurs in the context of the narration of the salvation history (78:22). In all the references, except in 41:10; 44:7; 49:7; 115:8; 118:8,9; 135:18; 146:3 Yahweh is the subject of **תִּפְנַת**. The motive of it is the acknowledgement of Yahweh as:

The height which offers security (9:10)
succour (35:20; 115:9,10,11)
defence (28:7; 33:20; 84:13; 115:9,10,11)
strength (28:7)
Protection (27:1; 52:9)
ovation (27:1; 25:5)
light (27:1)
truth and faithfulness (31:6)
refuge (62:9; 91:2)
stronghold (91:2)
hiding place (32:7)

In other places **תִּפְנַת** is motivated by the manifold blessings experienced from Yahweh, including splendour and majesty (21:2ff), renewal of inner strength (40:4); by the confession of Yahweh as holy and enthroned upon the praises of Israel (22:4);⁸ by the consciousness of Yahweh's choice of the godly (4:4); by his unflinching sustaining power (55:23); by his goodness (86:5); by his faithfulness and righteousness (143:1).⁹

⁸ Cf. A. A. Anderson, *Psalms (1-72)*, London, 1972, p. 187; Kraus, *Psalmen 1-59*, Neukirchen, 51978, p. 326 for Israel's understanding of 'praise'. Cf. A.A. Anderson, *Psalms(1-72)*, London, 1972, p.187; Kraus, *Psalmen 1-59*, Neukirchen,

⁹ cf. Weiser, Op.cit. p. 819; Kraus, *Psalmen 60-150*, Neukirchen, 51978, p. 1117 for comments on the two terms in their context.

In the Hymn and the Song of Thanksgiving these conceptions and confessions are presented as having their practical proofs in the deliverance, healing and protection which have been experienced from Yahweh. They are celebrated in praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh to bring him the glory and honour due to him as one who demonstrates his saving grace through them and lets himself be known and confessed through them. In the Lament the conception and confessions are resorted to win strength, steadfastness and courage in the midst of distress and fatal danger to existence, to keep faith in Yahweh and wait for his saving grace which will confirm these conceptions and confessions. The Wisdom teacher exhorts them to present Yahweh to his disciple as the very ground of life on whom the disciple is to depend for a safe guide through life and the true understanding of it.

לְפָנֶיךָ is employed in all the Psalm types, on the strength of the conceptions and confessions, to maintain commitment to Yahweh and the sense of security in him, or to call to commitment to him and a sense of security in him.

There are a few references noted above in which לְפָנֶיךָ has an object other than Yahweh. In the cases in question לְפָנֶיךָ has as its object

- idols (115:8; 135:18)
- men of standing (118:8,9; 146:3)
- abundant wealth (52:9)
- act and gain of oppression (62:1)
- bow (44:7)
- wealth (49:7)
- an intimate (41:10)

Of all these cases it is only in the last one that לְפָנֶיךָ conveys a positive sense. There it makes it clear that לְפָנֶיךָ is a necessary factor in human relationships. It is important for human intercourse, for it belongs to the vital elements which create healthy human co-existence and fellowship. Its source is traced back to an act of Yahweh in the early life of man (Ps.22:10).¹⁰ It is thus seen as an essential God-given equipment for human existence and interaction.¹¹

¹⁰ cf. A. Cohen, *The Psalms*, 1950, pp. 62-63.

¹¹ The translations make it appear that the verse is concerned with the benefit which the Psalmist received in his youth from Yahweh. Cf. RSV, JB, NEB. Cf. also M. Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, New York, 1960, pp. 136, 139; Kraus, op.cit. p.321; *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament I* (TWAT) pp. 609-610. E.T. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament II*, (TOOT) pp. 88-89.

In the other cases **לְפָנָים** conveys a negative sense.¹² In 118:8, 9 it is made comparatively less important than **לְפָנֵי**, seek refuge, the object of which is Yahweh. The context makes it clear that the two verbs are related in meaning. They share the idea of looking to one as a means of security. Through his experience of Yahweh (vv.5b, 6a, 7a, 13b, 14) the Psalmist is convinced that the act of counting on one for security will be wrongly directed if man is made the object of it, for even the most powerful man is weak before Yahweh. In 146:3 the act is prohibited in the direction of man, irrespective of his power and standing. He is no source of salvation. Similarly **לְפָנָים** in connection with idols (115:8; 135:18), extortion (62:11) and instrument of military power (44:7), is frowned upon. It creates an attitude which denies Yahweh as the ground of existence and the source of security.

The presupposition of all these is that **לְפָנָים** in the sense in which we are made to see it here, is improper in human relationship, or in connection with things, irrespective of their quality and value, for it discloses a reverential element which the nature of man and of things does not allow any of them to deserve.

Parallel to **לְפָנָים** in some of its contexts in the Psalms are the expressions

- pouring out the heart (62:9)
- rejoicing of the heart (13:6)
- crying (22:6)
- not wavering (26:1)
- lifting up the soul (25:1; 143:8)
- boasting (49:7)
- having faith (78:22)
- fearing (40:4)
- sacrificing (4:6)
- the heart not fearing (27:3)
- refuge (52:9)
- not fearing (56:5,12)
- not becoming vain (62:11)

They enable us to see that **לְפָנָים** has a rich content of meaning, ranging from an objective act of positive self-surrender to a subjective condition of a strong sense of security and stability. We are led to see that

¹² cf. *TWAT*, I, p. 60. ET *TDOT*, II p. 89.

it indicates total self-dedication to Yahweh (25:1; 143:8; 78:22; 37:5). **פָּעַל**, cry, (22:6) and **פָּרָשׂ**, sacrifice, (4:6) indicate it as an act which is not without an element of pain and cost.¹³ The spirit of willingness and deliberate decision belongs to its nature (62:9) as well as reverence (40:4). It contains elements which create courage (27:3; 56:12), stability (26:1, cf. 21:8; 52:10a, 125:1), joy (13:6) and prevent vanity (62:11). In two cases where it indicates human attitude to wealth (49:7; 52:9) we are made to see it as carrying elements of boasting and strength. These are viewed derogatorily.

פָּטָבָּה is also employed against the background of expressions such as

- seeking (9:11)
- gladness (33:21)
- friend of peace (RSV: bosom friend)
- eating one's bread (41:10)
- doing good: 'shepherding' faithfulness (37:3)
- blessedness (84:13)
- firmness of heart (112:7)
- salvation (13:6; 44:7; 78:22; 86:2)
- steadfast love (21:8; 26:3; 32:10; 14:8)

Like those terms and expressions paralleled with it, which we have noticed above, they fall within the semantic field of **פָּטָבָּה**. They form, as it were, a halo around **פָּטָבָּה** and help us to see further elements of meaning in it. They enable us to see that **פָּטָבָּה** contains elements of seeking (9:11), gladness (33:21) and firmness (114:7). It effects peace and optimism (22:6; 25:2); it leads to approval and acceptance (84:13) and brings one into the sphere of the divine grace (21:8; 32:10; 143:8), deliverance, healing and welfare (13:6; 44:7; 78:22; 86:2).

It is also to be noted that **פָּטָבָּה** is employed in some cases against a background which is strongly marked by a pronounced emphasis on the Temple or Zion as the dwelling place of Yahweh with which the conception of him observed above are associated (9:12; 27:4; 52:10; 78:68,69; 84:2,3; 5:118; 19:20; 135:2). It is the sacred place with which Yahweh is connected in a special way, so that it is seen as the place which 'houses' his presence in a special way (IKgs 8:27ff) and from where his word, his help

¹³ Cp. Kraus, op.cit., p. 326.

and his blessing stream forth to his people.¹⁴ It is a supernatural source of power, power which is very much concerned with the normal welfare of men.¹⁵ The eyes of בָּטָח are directed to the Temple as the seat of the one who is the ground of existence and on whom man should count for security.

IV

Beside בָּטָח two of its nominal derivatives occur in the Psalms, מִבְּטָח and לִבְּטָח. Each of them occurs three times. The former is used in all its three occurrences adverbially to modify יִשְׁבֶּה, dwell, (4:9), שָׁכֵן dwell, (16:9), בָּנָה, guide (78:53). In 4:9, in the light of the Psalmist's confession of Yahweh as the sole source and sustainer of life, it indicates a condition of existence which ensures security and the sense of commitment to Yahweh.

In 16:9 it indicates a similar condition of existence. Here, however, it stands against the background of the Psalmist's exclusive consciousness of Yahweh's presence with him. The divine favour to him does not only ensure his stability and security, it also brings him to dedicate himself to Yahweh.

In 78:53 the substantive is used to describe the condition of safety which Yahweh's kind guidance and direction ensured to the people of Israel on their exodus from Egypt.¹⁶ In all the three references it is commonly testified that the condition of existence which לִבְּטָח describes is an act of Yahweh.

The second substantive, מִבְּטָח, is directly linked with Yahweh. In 65:6 its content is made clear by אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשֻׁעָנוּ, 'the God of our salvation'. Yahweh is the God who is concerned with the safety and welfare of his people and acts in the context of *Gemeinschaftstreue* to ensure these to them. מִבְּטָח thus indicates him as the object on whom they can count for their safety and welfare.

¹⁴ Cf. Kraus, *Theologie der Psalmen*, Neukirchen, 1979, pp.88ff.

¹⁵ Cf. R.E. Clements. *God and Temple*. Oxford, 1965, p. 67.

¹⁶ Cf. Kraus, op.cit., 710; Anderson, *Psalms (73-150)*, London, 1981, p. 573; Weiser, op.cit., p. 542.

In 40:5 **מִבְטָח** stands in the light of **אָשֶׁר**.¹⁷ It makes it clear that the person who claims Yahweh as **מִבְטָח** enters into a state of happiness, he is approved and accepted by Yahweh.¹⁸ Yahweh is thus indicated through

מִבְטָח as the dimension with life-promoting qualities worthy of a person's confidence.

In 71:5 **מִבְטָח** is paralleled with **תְּקִנּוֹת**,¹⁹ which denotes an object of expectation. It lets us see **מִבְטָח** as carrying an element of expectancy.²⁰ In v.6a Yahweh is confessed as the object of support. **מִבְטָח** is thus used to indicate Yahweh as the reliable object in whom one can place one's confidence and live in happy expectancy. He is seen in all three cases as the sole reliable ground of existence to be looked to for security.

V

In comparison with the other Psalm types in which **חִטָּבָה** occurs, it is in the Lament that **חִטָּבָה** occurs most frequently. It occurs here, together with its nominal derivatives, **חִטָּבָה** and **מִחִטָּבָה**, twenty-six times. Gerstenberger has observed that occasionally the personal statement of confidence occurs at the end of the Psalm (Ps. 55:24; 84:13), 'In der Regel aber ist sie Kernstück eines zum Klagelied gehörenden Formelements, der Vertrauensäußerung.'²¹

We observe however, that in Ps. 4:6; 62:9 **חִטָּבָה** occurs in the context of exhortation. In 26:1 it is linked with the protestation of innocence, and in 28:7 with the expression of the certainty of having been heard. In 4:9; 13:6 it occurs in the conclusion of the Psalm. In two cases it is used negatively (52:9; 62:11). In 25:2; 86:2 and 143:8 it is linked with petitions. It here conveys not only the dedication of the Psalmist to Yahweh, but also a confession of his innocence (31:7). It is only in 16:9; 22:5,6,10; 31:15; 44:7; 52:10; 56:4,5,12; 27:3; 71:5 that **חִטָּבָה** occurs in the form element 'expression of confidence'. It

¹⁷ On the term cf. Westermann, *Forschung am Alten Testament*, München, 1974, pp. 191-195; TWAT I, pp.481. ET TDOT I, pp.445-448.

¹⁸ Cf. Westermann, *ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁹ On it cf. W. Zimmerli, *Man and his Hope in the Old Testament*. London,(2nd edition) 1981; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* II, pp. 521-523; *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* II, pp. 640-641.

²⁰ Cf. Zimmerli, *ibid.*, p. 83.

²¹ Cf. *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* I, p.305.

occurs here twelve times, so that its importance in the form element cannot be denied. Its occurrences in the other section of the Lament, as noted above, as well as its absence in the majority of the Psalms of Lament with the form element in question (3; 5; 6; 7: 17; 39; 42:43; 54; 59; 61; 64; 69; 140:141) would not however let us make a rule out of the twelve occurrences in eight Psalms and see **תְּבֻנָּה** as the core of the Lament. Even in the so-called 'Psalm of Confidence', a sub-division of the Lament of which it is said 'Seine Keimzelle ist die Vertrauensäusserung' ²² it is clear that in some of the Psalms in this category **תְּבֻנָּה** does not occur (11; 23; 131). And in those in which it occurs, as pointed out above, it occurs twice in the form element 'expression of confidence'. In the other cases however it occurs in a statement of exhortation and in the conclusion of the Psalm, It could however be said, in the light of its relatively greater frequency in the Lament, that **תְּבֻנָּה** belongs to the central elements of the Lament. It is seen as one of the essential elements in the spiritual equipment of the Psalmist for his existential struggles.

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²² Cf. H. Junkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*. Göttingen, 1933, p. 256,

Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, London: A & C Black, 1991.

Professor Morna Hooker's commentary replaces in Black's New Testament Commentaries the work by Sherman Johnson.

In the introduction there is a section on the 'Task of a commentator' in which we are shown the changes that have taken place in the standpoint from which the several commentators have viewed this gospel since the appearance of Vincent Taylor's work. Taylor's commentary was solidly based on source criticism; Nineham sought to answer the question, 'How was Jesus seen and interpreted by the early communities?'; redaction criticism, as in Edward Schweitzer's commentary, concentrated on how Mark himself interpreted the good news; now, new methods of literary criticism are being used in the belief that the text can properly be considered in its own right, without any consideration of the author's original intention.

Hooker thinks that the belief that the author was named Mark and was associated with Peter is reasonably well founded and probably correct, that the date of composition was probably some time after A.D. 70 (based on the view that chapter 13 reflects the trauma of those who had assumed that the destruction of the Temple was the sign which heralded the end of the era), and that, on the evidence available, the hypothesis that Mark's gospel was the earliest of the Synoptic gospels to be written solves more problems of inter-gospel relationships than any other.

The gospel was intended to be read aloud to a congregation, i.e. for the majority of people it was intended to be heard rather than read, and this is reflected in the use of repetitions, summaries, recapitulations and variations on a theme. The word translated 'again' is used no fewer than twenty six times and serves to remind the hearers of the previous occasions when something occurred. Modern readers tend to analyse the gospel, dividing it into sections and sub-sections which deal with particular themes, but those who first heard it would have been far more aware of the links between different parts of the story than of the divisions.

In her section on the theology of Mark, Hooker begins by stating, 'Because of the difficulty in separating Markan interpretation from the material he inherited, and because of the impossibility of isolating Mark's own understanding of the story from that which we ourselves read into the text, we cannot claim to be able to present Mark's theological position with

any certainty.' She does, however, point out a number of important issues such as Christology, Discipleship and the Death of Jesus.

In discussing the last of the above issues Hooker shows that a number of different reasons can plausibly be given for the dominance of this theme in Mark's story: so, for example, it was in accordance with God's will and was foretold in scripture; or, a community which was ignoring the cross and was interpreting the Christian life exclusively in terms of glory and honour had to be reminded that those who would be disciples of Jesus must be prepared to follow him along the way of rejection and shame; or, a community undergoing persecution for its faith needed to be encouraged by the account of Jesus' acceptance of suffering. The appropriateness of Mark's message to these different situations illustrates the difficulty of recovering the original situation which Mark was addressing and demonstrates the part which readers play in the interpretation of the gospel, since it can mean different things in different circumstances.

As an example of Hooker's treatment of verses which have been variously interpreted we may choose her comments on Mark 9:1. She writes, 'This is one of the most discussed verses in the whole of Mark's gospel. Part of the difficulty is the fact that it contains an apparently unfulfilled prophecy, since, almost twenty centuries after the words were spoken, there is little sign of the Kingdom of God being established in the world, let alone its coming 'with power', a phrase which indicates the finality and universality of its coming. Was Jesus then wrong? Many of the contorted explanations which exegetes have managed to twist out of these words have been based on the conviction that Jesus could not have been mistaken, and that some fulfilment of his words must therefore be found in history.' Hooker then notes some of the events which have been identified with the coming of the Kingdom - the resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the fall of Jerusalem, the Transfiguration of Jesus. She pays particular attention to Dodd's interpretation in which stress is laid upon the fact that the word translated 'come' is, in Greek, a perfect participle and the saying therefore means that some of Jesus' hearers will see (recognise) that the Kingdom of God has already come. Hooker writes, 'Though it might tally with Mark's portrait of the disciples to suggest that only a few of them will grasp the truth about what is taking place in Jesus before it is too late, it is clear elsewhere that though the Kingdom may be present in the ministry of Jesus it is not yet fully here.'

Of the suggestion that the saying of Jesus is linked with the narrative which follows, namely the Transfiguration, Hooker accepts that this has some attraction as far as Mark's interpretation is concerned, but says that it is not obvious how the Transfiguration can be understood to be the coming of the Kingdom in power and, moreover, it seems absurd to find the solemn announcement that some of Jesus' hearers would live to see the Kingdom fulfilled in the experience of three of them less than a week later. She writes, 'If Mark intends us to see a close link we should probably understand the Transfiguration to be a 'preview' of what is going to happen...and though for Mark the two events belong together, it is a preview of the Son of Man in glory, rather than the Kingdom of God coming in power.'

So, since all attempts to find the fulfilment of Jesus' words in an historical event founder, the alternative is to suggest that he was mistaken in his expectation - a consequence of the limits of human knowledge inevitable in one who was truly incarnate. The problem of the non-arrival of the Kingdom in power has tended to obscure the fact that the saying is not so much a prediction of a particular event as a confident declaration of the final establishment of God's purposes. Even if we conclude that Jesus was in some sense wrong, we may well wish to affirm that he was in some sense right; the vindication he confidently expected took place in the resurrection but the final 'coming' of the Kingdom and of the Son of Man still belongs to the future.

Finally, Hooker writes, 'It is of course possible that the saying does not go back to Jesus at all but was created in the early Christian community; if so, it was formulated early enough for it to cause no difficulties as an unfulfilled prophecy. Whatever its origins, it would have been used in the community to encourage Christians with the assurance that God's final intervention was at hand.'

We welcome the honesty which recognises that one implication of the limits imposed by the incarnation is that Jesus may have been mistaken about the time of the coming of the Kingdom. Such a mistake could, of course, be either an under-estimate of the length of time before the coming, or an over-estimate. An over-estimate could lead to the 'absurdity' of a solemn announcement being fulfilled in less than a week. This possibility removes one of the objections to the finding of fulfilment in the Transfiguration.

The commentary contains special notes on the Son of Man, the baptism of John, the Kingdom of God, the Messianic Secret, Miracles, Parables, and Mark's ending. In her note on Mark's ending, Hooker does not find the arguments against Mark 16:8 to be compelling, and puts persuasively the case for accepting the verse as the intended ending of Mark's story.

The series (Black's New Testament Commentaries) to which this commentary belongs was designed to be, 'A series to meet the need for modern commentaries that are at once reliable in scholarship and relevant to the contemporary Church.....full enough for serious academic work.' Professor Morna Hooker is to be congratulated and thanked for giving us a book which well fulfils these intentions.

Vincent Parkin

Maxine Glaz & Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (Editors), *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care*. Fortress, Minneapolis. 1991, 225 pp.

This study calls for close attention from Biblical and Pastoral theologians. In the past decade alone there have been wide studies in the psychology, biology, anthropology and sociology of women, several thousand of them. However, little or no response has been forthcoming from theological circles to work out how the findings of such studies should influence theology and pastoral care. Male organised reflection and understanding continue to miss concerns that are essentially important to women and their pastoral care, as well as to their self-awareness and sense of identity.

In this book nine North American scholars have pooled their varied experience to take heed of 'the cry of a woman in travail' (Jer. 4:31), from their first hand knowledge in theory and practical counselling in clinical pastoral education, family and marriage therapy, nursing, education and psychiatry.

The book begins with a review of writings in psychology of women, an evaluation of a theory of psychology which takes full account of their findings but also is true to the convictions of theology.

'The main section has some six chapters, each devoted to one main area in which the peculiar feelings and experiences of women are highlighted:-

- The increasingly common situation in which a woman has to hold a demanding job while also caring for home and family. The experiences of Ruth, Naomi and Orpah relate to this.
- Women's hopes and fears centre around reproduction: menstruation, birth, menopause, miscarriage, infant death, infertility, not to mention the traumas of breast cancer and gynaecological malignancies. Clearly there is great need for a sensitive informed approach to pastoral care if spirituality support and helpful relations are to be experienced when sorely needed.
- Increasingly there is the shame and hurt of sex abuse, often incestuous, in both childhood and adulthood. Particularly careful counselling is needed to overcome the hiddenness and privacy in this. Sometimes it occurs in what are regarded as 'good' or 'Christian' home circles. The story of the rape of Tamar within the family of David is relevant here(2 Sam. 13,1-22).
- Battering may be physically or psychologically damaging and in either case spiritually demeaning. Forgiving of the perpetrator is difficult and often the shame of the victim , as of the one who commits the offence, makes self-forgiving remote.
- Depression in western society is nearing epidemic proportions, with women twice as likely to suffer from it. Its main causes and some ways of treating it are here related to theological insights. Damage over the centuries to the self-esteem of women has its legacy and this needs to receive light from the Bible — stories of freedom from slavery in Egypt, of our Lord's treatment of women, even across the deep divides, and the role of women in the early times of the Church are here dealt with.
- Women abandoned, divorced, parenting on their own, etc. are related to stories such as Tamar in Jacob's extended family. (Gen 35.38)

The final section takes up the theme of 'transition'. It summarises what has been written about 'travail' and makes use of the paradigm of the good neighbour in the Luke Ch.10 story of how the Samaritan treated the needy neighbour as neighbour to him. This is preferred to the usual basis of pastoral care as John Ch. 10 — the Good Shepherd or Pastor. The Samaritan responded to the 'cry' with real empathy, time and care just as Jesus met that other Samaritan's needs at the well, and the Syro-Phoenician and her daughter(Mk 7:24-30).

A theology of grace and hope, coupled with warm welcome to a place within the family of faith fortify women (and men) in awareness of God's acceptance. The 'transition' for all in 'travail' may be summed up in the story of Mary of Magdala and the faith found by her and restored for her in the experience of the tomb and recognition of her lord (John Ch.20). This book can form an ideal launching pad for dialogue between disciplines within theology' and also between theologians and professionals within the area of human behaviour.

Jim Boyd

Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Israel: The History of an Idea*, London, SPCK, 1992
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This is an impressive attempt to integrate the history of Israel under one idea. It speaks of the longing the Jews have experienced to return to the Holy Land from early times. This quest provoked messianic notions century by century: It aroused a Zionist movement in the nineteenth century. After the Holocaust Jewish eyes increasingly concentrated on the State of Israel as their refuge and their hope. It was not an easy situation especially in the light of the Arab resistance. World Jewry rallied in support and today Jews see the Jewish state as essential to the continued survival of Judaism and the Jewish people.

Dr Cohn-Sherbok defines his purpose as 'a succinct historical survey of this 4000-year-old longing for a Jewish homeland' (introduction, p. i). He sets out the work e.g. Ch. 1, Patriarchs, Kings and Prophets (1-23); Ch. 27 Restoration and Destruction of the Kingdom. It is in Ch. 3 that he attempts to deal with the 'the Messianic Idea.' Following the destruction of Judah in 70 AD, Israel lost its homeland. It was a time of despair, and in their despair they longed for a kingly figure of the house of David who would gather together the exiles' and build again Jerusalem. 'The promise of messianic redemption and return to Israel served as a means of overcoming national despondency at the loss of the Holy Land and the people's sacred institutions,' (p. 39) It was not only Israelites who would become God's emissaries. Second Isaiah e.g., described Cyrus' as the Lord's anointed:

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open before him gates that may not be closed, (Isaiah 45.1)

Among the list of messianic figures we find Elijah, Messiah ben Joseph, Messiah ben David Then follows the messianic Age and heaven which involved considerable speculation but on one point they agreed - that at the end of the days' of the Messiah all would be changed. A final judgement would come upon all human kind at the close of this era, a judgement which would include punishment for the wicked.

There follows a period of 'Early Messianic Expectation'(Ch: 4) which included 'The Mishnaic and Talmudic Period' (54-60), 'Midrashic Apocalypses' (61-64) 'Pre-Crusade speculations' (64-66) and, finally, 'Pseudo-Messiahs' (from 600 AD to 1000 AD). During the time of the Crusades, Jewish speculation took on a special intensity. Indeed, the date of the First Crusade (1096) was generally fixed upon as the time of deliverance. Thus Solomon ben Simeon (12th century) emphasised the widespread acceptance of this calculation:

And it came to pass in the year 4856, the 1058th year of our exile, in the eleventh year of the- 256th cycle (1096) when we had hoped for salvation and comfort according to the prophecy of Jeremiah 'Sing with gladness for Jakob and shout at the head of the nation' (31,7) But it was turned into sorrow and groaning, weeping and lamentation,

The Crusades thus gave rise to widespread longing for redemption. It was a period of speculation with calculations based variously on Daniel (p73) or Deuteronomy (p.75) or the date of the Torah(p.75); or various pseudo-Messiahs (p.90-93) including the Shabbataean movement (18th century)

In Chapter seven, entitled 'Religious and Spiritual Zionism' we are introduced to some religious and spiritual champions' of Zionism who 'attempted to reconcile the Jewish tradition with the quest to rebuild modern Jewish life in the Holy Land' e.g. Yehuda hai Alkalai (18th-19th century) who 'argued that Jewish settlers should establish Jewish colonies in Palestine in anticipation of the Messiah-' (p. 100). Alkalai argued that 'the advent of the Messiah is not simply a divine act — it requires human labour and dedication '. C.f. also Zwi Hirsch Kalischer (18th-19th Century), Abraham Isaac Kook (19th-20th century)

In chapter eight, 'Secular Zionism' the author points out that Modern secular Zionists have been preoccupied with the problem of Anti-Semitism rather than Messianic deliverance. Moses Hess (19th century), for example, says' that- 'no reform of Judaism can eliminate Jew-hatred

from Western society; (p.117) 'The only solution to the Jewish problem is the creation of a Jewish state which will serve as a spiritual centre for all of humanity.' Leon Pinsker (19th century) was equally pessimistic about anti-Semitism. 'The only remedy for anti-Semitism is for Jewry to reconstitute themselves as a separate people in their own land.' Theodor Herzl (19th-20th century), likewise, supported the creation of a Jewish homeland and undertook political steps to achieve this. Among these secular Zionists was one Ber Borochov, who tried to integrate Jewish nationalism with Marxist doctrine. In Borochov's view, only Palestine served as a feasible choice for a settlement of Jewish Society with Jews at the base. 'The Jewish proletariat needs such a remedy more than any other class because of its great suffering' (p.129)

'Anti-Zionism' is the theme of chapter nine. Zionism was seen especially by orthodox extremists as a betrayal of traditional values. According to these extremists, it was forbidden to bring on divine redemption through human efforts. The Zionist movement became a demonic force leading the people astray. It was' the duty of the pious to return to Zion but such an ingathering must he preceded by Messianic redemption. Some went as far as to claim that it was forbidden actively to accelerate divine deliverance (c.f. Samuel Raphael Hirch p.135). One Ultra-orthodox, Isaac Breuer, 'insisted that Zionism was depriving the Jewish people of its religious commitment in a misguided pursuit of modern notions' of nationhood. '(p.135)

An attack on Zionism came from another direction, from liberal Judaism. This spoke of the hopeless idealism of Zionism, its utopian character. It was simply impossible to bring about the emigration of millions of Jews to a country which was already populated. Assimilation alone could 'serve as a remedy' for the Jewish problem.' (p 137). In the section entitled 'Arab Anti-Semitism and Zionism', Dr Cohn-Sherbok deals with a number of Arabic exaggerations e.g. -'if a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jewish man then he will be damned for eternity.' (Wistrich p.234). According to the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism Israel represents a demonic satanic force.(p.148)

In his concluding reflections, the author writes (p.179):

Through the centuries this belief in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sustained generations of Jews who suffered persecution and death. As martyrs were slaughtered, they glorified God through' dedication to the Jewish faith. These heroic Jews who remained steadfast did not question the ways of God; rather their deaths testified to their firm belief in a providential Lord of history; In

Judaism this conviction gave meaning to the struggle of Jewish warriors, strength of endurance under cruel torture, and a way out of slavery through suicide. By believing in God, the Jewish people have managed to endure millennia of suffering with the assurance of divine deliverance

It is a fascinating and thrilling story over four thousand years. Dr Dan Cohn-Sherbok has the gift of precise essential writing. From the time of Abraham to the twentieth century he holds the attention of the reader and imparts something of the drama, something of encouragement, something of the suffering, and something of the solution to a nation's tenacity and deliverance.

It is a worthwhile and glowing tribute to a great nation.

E. A. Russell

Gerard W. Hughes, *Walk to Jerusalem in Search of Peace*, Darton Longman & Todd, 1991

I got to know Fr. Gerry Hughes when I was chaplain to overseas students in Glasgow from 1967 to 1971. It was therefore of special interest to read of his walk to Jerusalem.

The book is an account of an outer journey and an inner journey and the two are woven together and intertwined in a fascinating way. It is laced with humour and humanity as he bares his soul on many of the contemporary issues of faith, ecumenism and peace making. He describes his encounter with many people on the journey through Holland, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece and Israel, including his own swings of mood and responses to the vicissitudes of weather, the frustrations of finding shelter for the night and the mechanical problems of his pram-wheeled rucksack nicknamed Mungo!!

It might seem to some people that Gerry's special preoccupation with the awful contradiction of 'Christian' acceptance of nuclear weapons, however reluctant, is somewhat outdated by the sudden collapse of the Cold War since the journey was completed. However, I don't think this is the case. The search for a spirituality of peacemaking is every bit as relevant since the fall of the Berlin Wall, if not more so. It is interesting to read the section of the journey through the former Yugoslavia which

provides a thumbnail sketch of the background against which we can try to make sense of the disastrous breakdown which we witness today.

Gerry's great gift is his honesty and integrity and his willingness to think out loud on so many basic questions of faith and life. On the subject of the ecumenical movement, he shows how the German churches moved out of their denominational ghettos as a result of the experience of resistance to Hitler and in the aftermath of the destruction of buildings when they learnt to share the use of their churches. So often the forces of history can cut through all our hesitations and bigotry and help us to recognise the really important centralities of the faith.

He contrasts the simple faith and generosity of many people he met on the road with the caution and conservatism of some bishops and the attempt by the present Vatican to try to regain control and limit the impulses from Vatican II. He shows the tendency of the church to try to lock God up in structures, buildings or doctrines, but God is the Living God and won't be so confined. Fear seems so often to drive us to seek the wrong kinds of security either in weapons or in doctrines. But only when it leads us to recognise that there is no security in any created thing, do we find our true confidence and freedom in God.

The question he asks at the end is this: 'What are the really important influences that shape history?' And his answer is that it is the courage and faith of little people, those who are vulnerable, in fact in the true sense, the poor.

To rediscover that is the most important journey that each of us needs to make and we may have to learn it from the poor of the world. This is a book which can be read by a wide audience and yet goes to the heart of our search for a more authentic Christian life in the world.

John Morrow